

PS 3451.04 BUREAU OF PRISONS AWARDS PROGRAM, INCENTIVE AWARDS



Program Statement

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SUBJECT: Bureau of Prisons
Awards Program,
Incentive Awards

1. **PURPOSE AND SCOPE.** To recognize and promptly reward exemplary contributions to the organization's efficiency and effectiveness. Merit shall be the sole basis for granting any award. The provisions of this Program Statement apply to all BOP employees at all organizational levels.

This Program Statement establishes the Incentive Awards Program as a key component within the BOP. In addition to presenting new incentive awards initiatives, the Program Statement also incorporates previously published policy and instructions into a logically structured guide to be used by Human Resource officials and supervisors in fulfilling their responsibilities in human resource management.

2. SUMMARY OF CHANGES

a. Chapter 1 is updated to reflect the current legal basis and regulatory requirements; to require that the Director approve all forms of recognition presented on his or her behalf; to increase the award approval amounts for Assistant/Regional Directors, Wardens, and Training Center Directors; to allow human resource offices the option of using the Employee Awards System (EASY) program as the incentive awards register; to reflect new filing requirements for SF-50s; to require an inventory be maintained of purchased items to be used as incentive awards; and to reflect minor changes in other parts of Chapter 1.

b. Chapter 2 modifies the evaluation criteria for Quality Step Increases (QSI) and Sustained Superior Performance (SSP) Awards. QSIs will no longer be precluded because of reassignments. (**Note:** There is no change in the QSI policy regarding promotions.) The waiting period for receiving SSPs has been reduced from one year to six months.

Approving officials may now only approve nominations for employees who are within one month of eligibility for QSIs or SSPs. The changes for granting QSIs and SSPs will be effective for the rating period ending March 31, 2001.

c. Chapter 3 is updated to outline the Bureau's policy and procedures for granting time off awards. The one-year limitation for use of a time off award will remain in effect.

d. Chapter 5 is updated to clarify that Recruitment Awards should be processed as Individual Cash Awards; to specify that a shadow box display case may be used to mount the medals and lapel pins in the Honorary Service Medals section; and to clarify that employees cannot trade or assign their frequent flyer incentives to another employee in order to receive an award under the Travel Savings Awards Program.

e. Chapter 6 is updated to eliminate the criteria, form of recognition, and timeframes for the Bureauwide awards program. This information will be announced during the annual call for nominations.

Regional Offices should forward no more than two nominations for each Bureauwide award category to the Central Office. All nominations received at Regional Offices must be maintained for a period of two years.

f. Chapter 7 is updated to change the ordering procedures for Career Service Insignia and Career Service Certificates; to include instructions for requesting a service pin and a congratulatory letter signed by the Director for members of the Executive Staff and Chief Executive Officers; to change the procedures for requesting retirement timepieces and a retirement letter signed by the Director and to provide a new format for requests; to add a provision that a re-employed annuitant would not generally be eligible for a retirement plaque, timepiece, and a letter signed by the Director; to change the retirement plaque to include total Federal service or total Bureau service, whichever the employee chooses; and to eliminate the requirement for an engraved brass plate to be affixed to the flag box under the form of recognition in the Deceased Employee section.

g. Chapters 9 and 11 were reordered and Chapter 10 eliminated. The new Chapter 9 now addresses awards under the Senior Executive Service, including a change to the Distinguished and Meritorious Executive Awards. The new Chapter 10 addresses Miscellaneous Other Awards.

The names, evaluation criteria, and form of recognition for the Attorney General's Awards Program were eliminated since this information will be announced during the annual call for nominations.

3. DIRECTIVES AFFECTED

a. Directive Rescinded

PS 3451.03 Awards Program, Incentive Awards, Bureau of
Prisons (5/10/94)

b. Directives Referenced

PS 3000.02 Human Resources Management Manual (11/1/93)

4. STANDARDS REFERENCED. None.

5. EMPLOYEE ACCESS. Employees may have access to any and all information in this Program Statement and may have copies of any portion. All Human Resource Managers shall assure that the Human Resource office copy of this Program Statement is current at all times and is readily available to employees.

/
Kathleen Hawk Sawyer
Director

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CHAPTER 1: GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

100. LEGAL BASIS AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

1. Title 5 U.S. Code Chapters 43, 45, 53 and 55
2. 5 CFR Part 430
3. 5 CFR Part 531, Subpart E
4. 5 CFR Part 451
5. DOJ Order 1430.3A (4/14/87)
6. DOJ Order 1451.1A (12/14/78)
7. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps Personnel Manual, Instruction 1 of Subchapter CC27.1 and Instruction 1 of CC27.9
8. DOJ Policies, Guidance and Procedures on Time-Off Awards (6/9/92)

101. PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

1. The purpose of the Bureau of Prisons Incentive Awards Program is to recognize and reward promptly employees who perform in an exemplary manner or make significant contributions to the efficiency and effectiveness of Bureau operations and to honor those who have served the government faithfully and well.

The integrity of the program will be preserved when meritorious awards are given expeditiously and only to those who are truly deserving of recognition. Merit will be the sole basis for granting any award. This will diminish inequities that could undermine the credibility of the awards program. Awards should be granted without regard to grade level or type of position.

Awards received within the past five years will be a factor when considering all employees for a promotion through the competitive merit promotion procedures.

2. Employee recognition is extremely important to encourage and maintain employee morale and a high level of achievement. Unfortunately, this can have a negative impact on all employees if the recognition is awarded indiscriminately, without a clear connection between the award and the contributions made to the Bureau.

We need to ensure that in our efforts to recognize employees, we also remain cognizant of our public trust and fiscal responsibilities. In the interest of all taxpayers, it is of the utmost importance that we maintain the integrity of the incentive awards program. We must not indiscriminately grant awards. Always consider factors such as: impact, perception of others, and cost savings of the contribution being rewarded.

102. ELIGIBILITY

1. The Incentive Awards Program is applicable to all employees of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Awards may be granted to former employees or to the estate of deceased employees if the contribution which serves as the basis for the award was made while the employees were in the service of the government. Honorary awards of moderate value may be granted to private citizens or organizations for significant contributions that benefit the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

2. United States Public Health Service (PHS) Officers assigned to Federal Bureau of Prisons facilities may receive awards under the PHS Commissioned Officers' Recognition Program, as described in Chapter 8. They may be granted non-monetary, honorary recognition; however, they are not eligible for cash awards.

103. DELEGATION OF APPROVING AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. The **Attorney General** has overall responsibility for the Incentive Awards Program in the Department of Justice. She/He retains the authority to approve the Department's top honorary awards; to nominate other employees for awards granted by agencies and organizations other than the Department of Justice; to approve cash awards of more than \$5,000 and up to \$10,000; and to recommend to the Office of Personnel Management cash awards of more than \$10,000.

2. The **Deputy Attorney General** retains the approval authority on cash awards for SES employees, including SES attorneys. This authority does not pertain to awards that require the Attorney General's approval.

3. The **Office of Attorney Personnel Management** has delegated the authority to the Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, to approve awards up to \$5,000 for non-SES attorneys at the GS-15 level and below (or equivalent), as well as law clerks and law students.

4. The **Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons**, is responsible for assuring effective administration of the Incentive Awards program within the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The Director:

a. recommends employees for awards that require DOJ approval or concurrence;

b. delegates approval authority for cash awards up to \$3,000 to Assistant/Regional Directors and up to \$1,500 to Wardens and Training Center Directors;

c. approves cash awards of more than \$3,000 and up to \$5,000 for all Bureau employees;

d. approves the Bureauwide awards selections; and

e. approves all forms of recognition presented on behalf of the Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons.

5. The **Assistant Directors** are delegated the responsibility for:

a. overseeing the operations of the Incentive Awards Program within their respective divisions;

b. approving Quality Step Increases (QSIs), Time Off Awards (TOAs), and cash awards up to \$3,000 for all employees in their divisions;

c. approving suggestions having Bureau-wide impact and suggestion awards when their division is the lead or is primarily impacted by the implementation of an approved suggestion; and

d. approving all Bureau-wide divisional awards.

Note: Assistant Directors must obtain Executive Staff concurrence for all Bureau-wide divisional awards.

Assistant Directors may also approve superior accomplishment (cash) awards for special acts or service of up to \$3,000 for employees outside of their own division (for accomplishments that benefit their divisions). It is advisable to obtain concurrence from the employee's Warden, Regional Director, or Assistant Director.

6. The **Assistant Director for Industries, Education and Vocational Training (IE&VT)** is delegated responsibility as outlined in paragraph 5, above. Approving authority is also delegated for all awards for UNICOR employees in institutions at the Assistant Department Head level and higher, along with Central Office controlled positions.

7. The **Assistant Director for General Counsel and Review (OGC)** is delegated responsibility as outlined in paragraph 5, above. In addition, approving authority is also delegated for cash awards up to \$3,000 for attorneys at the GS-15 level and below (or equivalent), as well as law clerks and law students. Attorney awards must be endorsed by the Regional Counsel and approved by the Assistant Director, OGC; similarly, the Director must approve awards ranging from \$3,001 to \$5,000. Time Off Awards for attorneys must be endorsed by the Regional Counsel and approved by the Assistant Director, OGC.

8. The **Regional Directors** are delegated the responsibility for

overseeing the operations of the Incentive Awards Program within their regions, including:

a. the approval of Regional Director's Awards under the Bureauwide awards program;

Note: Regional Directors must obtain Executive Staff concurrence.

b. providing recommendations on all nominations for Bureau-wide awards, and

c. approving suggestions for Region-wide implementation and/or referral of suggestions for Bureau-wide implementation.

The Regional Director is the approving authority for QSIs, TOAs, and cash awards up to \$3,000, for regional and community corrections personnel, and for institution staff when the award exceeds the Warden's delegated authority (except for attorneys, law clerks/students and UNICOR employees at the Assistant Department Head level and higher).

Regional Directors may establish other requirements for award approvals in their regions.

9. **Wardens** are delegated responsibility for ensuring there is a comprehensive and equitable Incentive Awards Program operating at the institution level, with an Institution Supplement outlining all local policies and procedures. They are the approving authority for QSIs, TOAs, and cash awards up to \$1,500 for all institution employees except for those employees delegated to the Assistant Director, OGC and to the Assistant Director, IE&VT. Recommendations for awards exceeding \$1,500 will be forwarded to the Regional Office for action at that level.

Wardens are also responsible for approving suggestions implemented at their institutions and for referring suggestions to the Regional Office for region-wide or Bureau-wide implementation consideration.

10. **Training Center Directors** are delegated the responsibility for ensuring there is a comprehensive and equitable Incentive Awards Program operating at training centers, with a supplement outlining all local policies and procedures. They are the approving authority for QSIs, TOAs, and cash awards up to \$1,500 for all training center employees (except for those employees listed above). Recommendations for awards exceeding \$1,500 will be forwarded for approval to the Assistant Director for Human Resource Management.

Training Center Directors are also responsible for approving suggestions implemented at their training centers and for

referral of suggestions to the Central Office for Bureau-wide implementation consideration.

11. **Re-delegation of Authority.** The approving official of awards may re-delegate approval authority to an official serving in an acting capacity. In no instance may the approving official also be the recommending official, except when the recommending official is the Director.

Note: **The approving official must be at a management level higher than the recommending official.**

104. ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The **Assistant Director, Human Resource Management Division** has been delegated the responsibility for the overall administration of the Incentive Awards Program.

2. The **Deputy Assistant Director, Human Resource Management Division** provides the central administrative direction and review necessary for an effective awards program.

3. The **BOP Incentive Awards Coordinator**, Employee Relations Section of the Human Resource Management Division will be the focal point of all issues concerning the Incentive Awards Program within the Bureau, serve as an information resource, and coordinate the collection and processing of Bureauwide, Attorney General, and Government-wide awards.

4. The **Senior Executive Service (SES) Coordinator** will be the focal point for SES awards, including Presidential Rank Awards, performance awards (bonuses), and SES superior accomplishment incentive awards.

5. **Supervisors** at all levels have primary responsibility for the successful conduct and promotion of the Incentive Awards Program by assuring that they keep themselves informed of all aspects of the program, encourage employees and inform them of the opportunities the program offers for personal and group recognition (which includes the employee suggestion program). They must review their own operations and evaluate results for the purpose of identifying employees whose individual or group contributions have led to significant improvements.

6. New ideas and suggestions are frequently instituted without undergoing the formalities of the suggestion program. Supervisors are responsible for recognizing situations of this type in which initiative surpassing their expectation is displayed. In these instances, the supervisor should submit a recommendation for a superior accomplishment award and/or encourage/assist the employee in submitting the idea through the suggestion program.

7. Regional Human Resource Managers and Institution Human Resource Managers will:

- a. ensure proper maintenance of records on awards and suggestions,
- b. provide management officials with adequate information to ensure their compliance with this Program Statement and the effective functioning of the program,
- c. determine eligibility for awards,
- d. process awards in accordance with law, regulation, and the direction provided by this Program Statement, and
- e. publicize award selections.

Institution, Training Center, and Regional Incentive Awards Coordinators should be designated.

8. **Employees** all share the responsibility for efficient and economical Government operations. Every employee should aspire to make contributions to Government operations of such significance as to warrant recognition through this program.

105. THE INCENTIVE AWARD PLANNING AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. Incentive Award Planning and Review Committees must be operational at each institution, training center, regional office, and at the Central Office. Committees may review the overall effectiveness of the program and may make recommendations to the Chief Executive Officer (or Assistant Director, Human Resource Management Division, for Central Office) regarding the development of program policy, procedural issues, and promotional activities. All committees should have Union representation as required by the Master Agreement. (**Note:** The Central Office committee services Central Office employees only. A separate Bureau Committee has Bureau-wide responsibilities.)

2. Committees will serve as the reviewing body for suggestions and in making written recommendations as to approval, disapproval, nature and/or amount of suggestion awards. Committees may also review local awards as designated in institution supplements or operating guidelines.

3. The Bureau Committee (referred to as the Bureau Suggestion Committee) will include the Incentive Awards Coordinator, one member from each division, and a Union representative. The committee will meet on an "as needed" basis.

4. The Regional Office Committees will include the Regional Incentive Awards Coordinator and representation from the major program areas. Institution Committees will include the Institution Incentive Awards Coordinator, representation from the local union, and any others designated by the Chief Executive Officer.

5. Each Central Office division may establish a committee to make recommendations to their respective Assistant Director.

106. RECORDS AND REPORTS

1. The central clearance and records point for the Incentive Awards Program will be the Human Resource Manager at each organizational location.

2. **Incentive Awards Register.** Each award nomination and employee suggestion is to be assigned a log number and recorded in an Incentive Awards Register. The register should be maintained on a fiscal year basis and include sufficient information to track the status of awards and suggestions. At a minimum, the register must include the employee's name, grade, type of award nomination, date received, date approved/denied, the dollar amount for cash awards and the number of hours for TOA awards. Written documentation is required for each incentive award, whether approved or disapproved.

Records of incentive award actions must reflect the status and disposition of each case initiated, and processed awards must include the actions and recommendations of Incentive Awards Committees. Specific documentation requirements are described in the section for each type of award. Files must be maintained to substantiate expenditure of funds.

The **Employee Awards System (EASY)** automated tracking system may be used as the incentive awards register for awards and suggestions.

3. **Reports.** The Employee Relations Section (ERS), Central Office will request an annual statistical report on Foreign Language and Recruitment Awards and will include the required format and due dates. Human Resource Managers are to submit the reports to their respective Regional Human Resource Administrators. Each Regional Human Resource Administrator will submit a consolidated report to ERS, following the instructions in the annual request. (The reports from the Central Office Human Resource Office and the Training Center Human Resource

Offices will also follow the instructions in the annual request for these statistics.) ERS will gather statistics on other awards through the personnel automation system.

4. Official Personnel Folder. A Notification of Personnel Action (SF-50) must be processed for each QSI, TOA, and all cash awards. Except for QSIs, SF-50s for TOAs and all cash awards must include a remark indicating the reason for the award. Example remark: "Time Off Award for initiating cost saving procurement practices."

Any SF-50s generated for TOAs and cash awards will be filed on the left side of the Official Personnel Folder and will be retained for a period of five years or until an employee leaves the agency, whichever comes first. SF-50s for QSIs must be filed on the Official Personnel Folder's right side and maintained as a permanent record.

5. Other Award Filing Requirements. The following award materials must be maintained for a period of two years:

a. The nomination, with written justification and approval of a higher level manager, will be maintained in a file established for monetary awards or in the Employee Performance Folder (EPF).

b. Letters of appreciation/thanks not associated with the monetary award can be maintained in the files as indicated in a. above.

c. Copies of approved and disapproved suggestions are to be maintained in a file established for this purpose.

d. An inventory will be maintained of all purchased incentive award items (non-monetary). The nomination, with written justification and approval of a higher level manager, will be maintained in a file established for this purpose.

107. PUBLICITY AND CEREMONIES

1. All human resource offices are encouraged to publicize awards through newsletters and recalls. Employees of the Month/Quarter/Year, and Supervisors of the Quarter/Year selections, should be submitted to the Information, Policy, and Public Affairs Division for inclusion in the Monday Morning Highlights. (Use BOPNet GroupWise ID: BOP-IPP/PUBLIC INFORMATION)

2. Privileged information contained in award nominations should not be publicized or otherwise discussed with anyone not involved in the selection process, except on a "need-to-know" basis. **Award nominations should not be discussed with the nominee until the award has been approved.**

3. **Impact of the Privacy Act.** Routine data for promotion and publicity purposes (e.g., name, grade, organizational location, photograph of awardee, type and amount of award, and description of contribution) is considered public information and, therefore, is not subject to the Privacy Act. Personal information (e.g., date of birth, home address, professional affiliations, employment history) may not be publicized without prior permission from the employee.

108. NOMINATION FORMS

1. Most awards are submitted on a memorandum form. Local forms may be developed, where appropriate.

2. To ensure uniformity in the Bureauwide award nomination process, there is only one standard nomination form. The Bureau-wide awards form (BP-S172.034) is to be used for all nominations as indicated during the annual call for these awards. This form can be found on BOPDOCS and may be reproduced locally.

3. Personnel Form 19 is recommended for submitting employee suggestions, although use of this form is not mandatory.

109. FUNDING

1. Funds will be issued to each facility at the beginning of each fiscal year. Should a facility require additional awards funding, other budgetary institution resources must be utilized.

Note: Approved award recommendations may be deferred or denied due to budget curtailment or other unforeseen factors. In such cases, the affected employees should be so informed.

2. Central Office will fund the Bureau-wide awards program. Human Resource Managers will receive instructions regarding the cost center to which each of these awards should be charged.

110. REQUESTS FOR PURCHASE

1. In order to ensure that each item purchased as an incentive award is used as intended, each purchase request for an award must be certified by the local Human Resource Manager. A copy of signed purchase requests and documentation of the distribution of incentive award items must be maintained by the Human Resource Manager.

2. Each Human Resource Manager will be required to sign the following statement which must be on each purchase request, to include purchase requests for retirement plaques:

"I certify that the item(s) on this purchase request represent(s) incentive awards and will be distributed to employees only in accordance with the Office of Personnel Management, Department of Justice, and Federal Bureau of Prisons regulations on awards."

See Chapter 2, Superior Accomplishment Awards based on Special Acts or Service for more information about the purchase and distribution of incentive awards items.

111. TRAINING OF SUPERVISORS AND EMPLOYEES

The Human Resource Manager, in conjunction with the Employee Development Manager, is responsible for providing periodic training to managers, supervisors, and employees on the Incentive Awards Program (i.e., Institution Familiarization Training, Introduction to Supervision, and Core Skills). All employees should know the purpose, scope, and operation of the program.

Supervisors should have a common understanding of the criteria used in granting awards. Employees should be aware of job expectations and requirements for excellent and outstanding performance.

112. INSTITUTION SUPPLEMENTS OR OPERATING GUIDELINES

All human resource offices for institutions, training centers, regional offices, and the Central Office (for Central Office employees) are to have a written local supplement or operating guideline detailing all aspects of their Incentive Awards Program, to include a description of awards granted locally, the criteria/documentation requirements for each, and nomination/approval procedures. Any awards established must be consistent with current legal and regulatory authorities.

113. COMPTROLLER GENERAL (CG) DECISIONS AND OTHER RELATED INFORMATION

1. B-227559 (March 23, 1988) - The CG agrees with the Office of Personnel Management's disapproval of incentive awards programs to **reduce sick leave usage**. OPM's rationale is that sick leave is a statutory entitlement available to all government employees for use in appropriate circumstances, and awards for non-use are inappropriate.

2. B-233607 (October 26, 1989) and FPM Letter 451-7 (July 25, 1989) - The Director may authorize **travel expenses for attendance at a major award ceremony** of award recipients and one individual related to the recipient by blood or affinity, whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

3. 65 Comp. Gen. 738 (1986) and 5 USC 4503 - While it is recognized that appropriated funds may not generally be used to provide free food to government employees, **refreshments** may be purchased and considered as a "necessary expense" **for an awards ceremony reception** if the agency determines that the reception with refreshments would materially enhance the ceremony.

4. B-236040 (October 9, 1990) - An agency may pay a fee, which includes a luncheon, for attendance at a Federal Executive Board regional award ceremony by agency employees who had been selected for awards as well as their supervisors.

5. B-240001 (February 9, 1991) - The Incentive Awards Act does not authorize giving T-shirts to Combined Federal Campaign contributors.

6. 56 Comp. Gen. 57 (1976) - A labor relations arbitrator may order an agency to prepare and submit an award recommendation, but cannot order the agency to actually grant the award.

CHAPTER 2: GUIDELINES FOR MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY AWARDS

200. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. All award nominations must be submitted in writing and be approved by the official defined in Chapter 1. The approving official must be at a higher level than the recommending official.

2. An award should be discussed with the nominee only after the award has been approved.

201. QUALITY STEP INCREASES (QSI)

1. **Introduction.** QSIs are additional within-grade increases which augment the employees' basic pay and reward future performance. A QSI is appropriate when faster than normal advancement is warranted. Only General Schedule employees are eligible for QSIs. (Wage grade and temporary employees are not eligible for QSIs.)

2. **Evaluation Criteria.** A QSI may be considered only when the employee's most current overall performance rating of record is "outstanding."

This level of achievement must have been sustained for at least six months prior to nomination. The same period of performance may not be used as justification for more than one QSI.

The employee must not have received a QSI during the past 52 weeks.

A QSI is inappropriate for an employee who has been selected or is about to receive or just received a promotion, except for career ladder promotions or reclassifications.

The approving official may grant QSIs for employees who receive reassignments. The approving official must reasonably expect that the same high level of performance will continue.

Some employees who are eligible for QSIs may actually benefit more from an SSP. In many circumstances when the employee is about to be promoted, the employee will benefit more from an SSP award than from a QSI because the latter may not provide a greater step in the grade to which they will be promoted. This should be discussed with the recommending official. An employee who is close to retirement will only benefit from a QSI for a short time. (Being close to retirement does not preclude an employee from receiving a QSI, but consideration should be given to the benefit to the employee.)

An employee who receives a QSI does not start a new waiting period to meet the time requirements for a regular within-grade increase; however, **if a QSI places an employee in the fourth or seventh step of the grade, the waiting period for a regular within-grade increase is extended by 52 weeks.** In the latter case it may, at times, be more beneficial to wait for the regular within grade increase, then nominate the employee for a QSI.

3. Form of Recognition. A pay action which permanently increases the employee's rate of basic pay equivalent to a within-grade increase.

4. Nomination Procedures. Normally, a QSI is recommended concurrent with the annual performance appraisal. The immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the recommendation and obtaining information on the employee's eligibility for a QSI.

Nominations should be submitted using either of the methods described below:

When the performance evaluation contains substantial documentation of the employee's performance in relation to the performance standards, the supervisor can submit a copy of the performance evaluation and a cover memorandum (or local form) which recommends the QSI.

If the performance evaluation does not contain substantial documentation of the employee's performance as described above, the supervisor must submit a narrative justification which substantiates the employees' outstanding performance.

If the appraisal is more than 60 days old, a supplemental written statement of the reasons for granting the QSI will be required.

5. Selection Procedures. Only nominations for employees who are within one month of eligibility for a QSI may be submitted to the approving official. The approving official (in accordance with Chapter 1) will make the determination regarding the nominations. Disapproved recommendations will be discussed with the supervisor and returned.

202. SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FOR SUSTAINED SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE (SSP)

1. Introduction. This is a lump sum cash award granted in recognition of an employee's sustained superior performance which exceeds normal job requirements for a period of at least six months.

Temporary employees may be eligible for SSP awards, if all requirements are met.

Guidance on awards for members of the SES is contained in Chapter 9.

2. **Evaluation Criteria.** An SSP award may be given only to an individual (rather than a group).

One or more job elements of an employee's position must be performed for a period of at least six months in a manner which clearly exceeds normal job requirements. The SSP award must be supported by a current performance rating of **"exceeds" or higher**.

The employee must not have received another cash performance award, i.e., SSP or QSI, within six months preceding the date of nomination. The same period of performance may not be used as justification for more than one SSP or QSI award.

An award for Special Act or Service during the six month period is not disqualifying.

3. **Form of Recognition.** Recipients of these awards may receive up to 15% of their rate of basic pay. The full amount for an SSP award may be granted only once in any six-month period. Amounts received for Special Act Awards are **not** counted toward the 15% limit.

To provide managers with flexibility in choosing award amounts, the following table is provided:

GS 1-4	\$100 up to 15% of basic salary
GS 5-8	\$150 up to 15% of basic salary
GS 9-11	\$200 up to 15% of basic salary
GS 12-13	\$250 up to 15% of basic salary
GS 14-18	\$300 up to 15% of basic salary

The Bureau recommended (not mandated) dollar range for these awards is 1% to 3% of the basic pay rate. An SSP award has significant meaning; therefore, it is recommended (not mandated) that the amount of these awards be not less than 1% of the basic pay rate, unless budgetary restraints require a lower amount be granted. (For wage grade positions, the hourly rate will be multiplied by 2,087 to obtain an annual pay that can be equated with the nearest first step of a grade in the General Schedule.)

In determining the dollar amount of an SSP, it should be noted that a step increase (QSI or within-grade increase) is approximately 3% of basic pay and a promotion is equivalent to approximately 6% or more of basic pay for positions in the General Schedule (GS).

4. **Nomination Procedures.** Nominations for these awards are

accepted at all times, although the most appropriate time to submit a performance award nomination is at the end of the appraisal cycle. The immediate supervisor is responsible for initiating the nomination in memorandum format or the locally establishment format, indicating the type of award, and dollar amount being recommended. The immediate supervisor must also obtain information on the employee's SSP eligibility.

When the performance evaluation contains substantial documentation of the employee's performance in relation to the performance standards, only a cover memorandum will be required as a nomination. Otherwise, nominations are to be submitted in narrative format. All nominations must be supported by the employee's most recent performance appraisal.

If the appraisal is more than 60 days old, a supplemental written statement of the reasons for granting the SSP will be required.

5. Selection Procedures. Only nominations for employees that are within one month of eligibility for an SSP may be submitted to the approving official. The approving official (in accordance with Chapter 1 of this Manual) will make the determination regarding the recommendations. Disapproved recommendations will be discussed with the supervisor and returned.

203. SUPERIOR ACCOMPLISHMENT AWARD BASED ON SPECIAL ACTS OR SERVICE

1. Introduction. This award may be monetary or non-monetary. The monetary award is a lump sum cash award given for a one-time or non-recurring contribution by an employee or a group of employees in the public interest connected with or related to official employment. The non-monetary award is a medal, certificate, plaque, citation, badge, or other similar item that has an award or honor connotation.

An inventory will be maintained of all purchased incentive award items. The nomination, with written justification and approval of a higher level manager, will be maintained in a file established for that purpose.

All employees are eligible for this award, including SES employees, although Special Act or Service Awards for SES employees are inappropriate when they are based on duties covered by the performance work plan.

Temporary employees are eligible for Special Act or Service Awards.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 offer a variety of awards which fall within the parameters of this award authority.

2. **Evaluation Criteria.** This type of recognition is appropriate when an employee or group of employees perform(s) substantially beyond expectations on a specific assignment, aspect of an assignment, or job function; for a single scientific achievement; an act of heroism or similar one-time special act of a non-recurring nature. This award may also be presented to any employee or group of employees for disclosure of fraud, waste, or abuse in the Federal Government that resulted in tangible benefits to the Government.

3. **Form of Recognition.** The amount of the monetary award will be based upon tangible savings and/or intangible benefits to the Government. (Refer to the Awards Tables in Chapter 2, pages 2-7 through 2-9 for additional information.) Amounts less than those in these tables may be granted.

In determining the amount of a group award, the value of the contribution should be evaluated first and the amount divided among the group members, either equally or in proportion to the contribution of each member. An exception may be made when the amount to be shared would be too small to be meaningful and motivating.

A non-monetary award may include: Letters of Commendation, Certificates of Appreciation, medals, plaques, citations, badges, or other similar items that has an award or honor connotation. Purchased items must:

- a. be of nominal value (under \$25);
- b. contain Bureau and/or other BOP affiliated insignia or logo; and
- c. be something that can be worn or displayed.

The purchase of non-monetary items costing more than \$25 must be approved by the Regional/Assistant Director.

Note: **Regional/Assistant Directors may establish general cost limitations for purchasing plaques which would not require further approval by the Regional/ Assistant Director.**

Examples of other appropriate types of items include: tee shirts, pens, coffee mugs, paper weights, baseball-type caps, etc. Examples of inappropriate types of items include: television sets, fishing rods/reels, coffee makers, radios, dinner certificates, trips, gift certificates, and sporting event tickets.

Incentive award items may not be purchased for general distribution to employees nor may they be distributed merely for attending a particular function (such as a conference or a training session). Items that are made available for general distribution to participants are not in the spirit of an incentive award. These types of purchased items (for general distribution) should only be made available at the personal expense of the participants.

Note: The Human Resource Manager must sign all purchase requests certifying that items purchased will be distributed in accordance with incentive award regulations (see Chapter 1).

There is no limit to the number of these awards that an individual can receive in a given period.

4. Nomination Procedures. Nominations for these awards are accepted at all times. The immediate supervisor (or other management official aware of employee contributions) is responsible for initiating the recommendation. Justifications are to be submitted in simple narrative format with emphasis on results achieved and, if possible, identification of benefits which can be measured and converted into monetary benefits. The Award Tables in Chapter 2, pages 2-7 through 2-9 should be consulted in determining the dollar amount of the award.

5. Selection Procedures. The approving official (in accordance with Chapter 1 of this Manual) will make the determination regarding the recommendations.

For group awards, when one nomination is submitted to justify awards for more than one employee, the total dollar amount recommended must be added together to determine the appropriate approving official (see Chapter 1, Delegation of Authority). This does not preclude individual recognition for group achievements; however, separate nominations must be submitted, describing individual contributions to the government.

Disapproved recommendations will be discussed with the supervisor and returned to him/her.

A remark must be placed on the SF-50 which indicates the justification for the award. Example remark: "Special Act Award for designing and implementing the institution's strategic plan for reduction in employee turnover."

AWARD TABLE
FOR CONTRIBUTIONS WITH TANGIBLE BENEFITS
(SUGGESTIONS, INVENTIONS, AND SPECIAL ACTS OR SERVICES)

**Estimated First Year
Benefits to Government**

Amount of Award

Up to \$10,000

10% of benefits

\$10,000 - \$100,000

\$1,000 for the first \$10,000
plus 3% of benefits over
\$10,000

\$100,001 or more

\$3,700 for the first \$100,000
plus .5% of benefits over
\$100,000

AWARD TABLE BASED ON INTANGIBLE BENEFITS

The following definitions will assist in interpreting the attached chart:

EXTENT OF APPLICATION

LIMITED - Affects functions, mission or personnel of one office, facility, installation, or an organizational element of a headquarters. Affects a small area of science or technology.

EXTENDED - Affects functions, mission, or personnel of several offices, facilities, or installations. Affects an important area of science or technology.

BROAD - Affects functions, mission, or personnel of an entire regional area of command. May be applicable to all of an independent agency or a large bureau. Affects a broad area of science or technology.

GENERAL - Affects functions, mission, or personnel of several regional areas or commands, or an entire department of a large independent agency, or is in the public interest throughout the nation or beyond.

VALUE OF BENEFIT

MODERATE VALUE

Change or modification of an operating principle or procedure which has moderate value sufficient to meet the minimum standard for a cash award: an improvement of rather limited value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.

SUBSTANTIAL VALUE

Substantial change or modification of an operating principle or procedure: an important improvement to the value of a product, activity, program, or service to the public.

HIGH VALUE

Complete revision of a basic principle or procedure: a highly significant improvement to the value of a product, major activity, program, or service to the public.

EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

Initiation of a new principle or major procedure; a superior improvement to the quality of a critical product, activity, program, or service to the public.